

NEWSLETTER

2nd Issue
August 2022

Published by: ITStudy Hungary Educational and Research Centre
Editor: Mária Hartyányi
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Lesson Study for VET

Teachers' collaboration for Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training



LS4VET Training Course

The LS4VET project aims to adapt the Lesson Study (LS) methodology for Vocational Education and Training (VET). In VET, LS has only been sporadically applied and - "to the best of our knowledge"- never been adapted systematically.

The objective of this project is therefore to achieve deep and sustainable impact — the improvement of the quality of education through enhanced teacher collaboration and professional development — in VET schools that will apply the LS4VET method.

The second intellectual outcome of the project was the creation of a professional development (PD) programme tailored to the needs of VET teachers/trainers, aiming to prepare and support participants for and through the piloting of the adapted method of Lesson Study (the LS4VET Model, the first intellectual outcome) in their school.

As a first step, the partnership developed a very detailed competence map, describing the knowledge, skills, and competences VET teachers need for planning and running a successful Lesson Study in their schools.

Based on this, the LS4VET course curriculum was designed to include five modules as follows:

- *Module 1 – LS4VET Design – Focus on Planning*
- *Module 2 – LS4VET Implementation – Focus on Process*
- *Module 3 – LS4VET Sustainability – Focus on Progress*
- *Module 4 – LS4VET Impact – Focus on leadership and team collaboration (Optional)*
- *Module 5 – 21st Century Teaching Methods – Focus on the Digital World (Optional)*

The learning content of the modules was then elaborated and peer-reviewed in English.

A multilingual e-learning platform was implemented in parallel with the content development by applying the open-source Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Learning Environment) framework

<https://course.ls4vet.itstudy.hu/>

The LS4VET course was designed as a hybrid form, involving individual e-learning and online and offline group work, supported by e-tutors and LS4VET facilitators and/or knowledgeable others (in line with the LS4VET Model, knowledgeable others from the academia and/or the industry support participants in the implementation of their Lesson Study for VET).

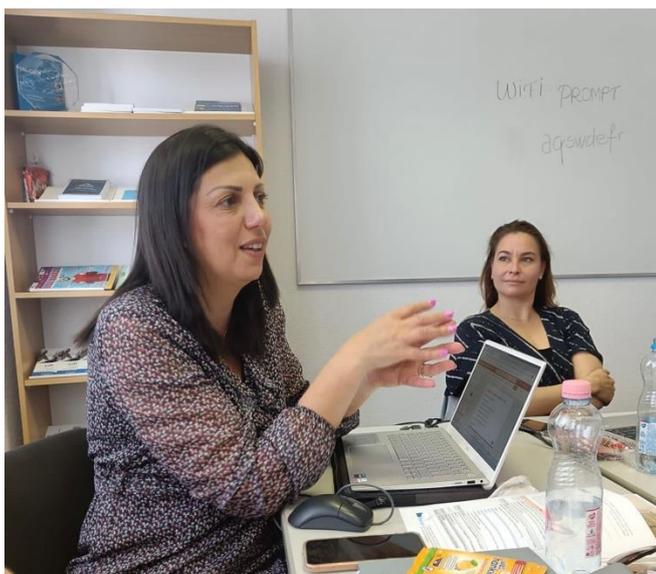


Piloting of the LS4VET course in the partner countries

The partnership decided to first pilot the English language course by smaller groups (3-4 teachers) in all partner countries, to use their experiences and feedback to improve the structure and content of the course and the online learning environment as well.

Pilot in MALTA

The piloting of the LS4VET course in Malta involved 4 teacher educators from the University of Malta and 3 lecturers from the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). The course spread out over a period of 4 months (March to June 2022) and took a blended approach that included 28 hours of online learning and 8 hours of face-to-face sessions. Besides this, the 3 lecturer-participants also engaged in communications among themselves and with a teacher educator through emails, online forum discussions and shared lesson study related documents on OneDrive.



The lecturers reported to find this course useful, as they had an opportunity to share their expertise and to think out of the box while coming up with ideas for their research lesson which focused on wedding daytime management. Their feedback suggests that the main takeaway for them was that they learned how to better engage with students in class to make learning more relevant and meaningful. Indeed, following this experience, ITS is exploring ways how to integrate Lesson Study as a professional development approach that lecturers could engage in.

Pilot in AUSTRIA

The Austrian LS4VET pilot team at the HTBLuVA Wr. Neustadt consisted of four members of the IT department and a lecturer from PH NÖ who supported the Lesson Study research lesson (LSRL) development. Apart from meetings at the school for observation, interviews, and discussions, all planning and reflection meetings were held online.



This pilot was documented carefully: LSRL lesson plans, materials, and reports for two cycles are available at <https://bit.ly/3cKNomq>

Documentation of coursework for assessment was done via Moodle as assignment submissions and forum entries using templates which worked out well for the team.

Dissemination activities happened at various levels: At the school, a report at the schoolyear-closing teacher conference and discussions with the school quality management team were held. External dissemination happened through the professional school accounts at XING and LinkedIn. A long-term goal is the introduction of Lessons Study into the mandatory new 4-semester BA teacher education program for prospective HTL teachers offered by PH NÖ.

Next steps will include a project participation report in a local weekly newspaper via a HTL specific attachment and three conferences:

- the biannual IT department heads' meeting
- a congress focusing on developments and challenges of HTLs
- an open LSRL at the WALs 2023 conference

Participating in LS4VET has been a great opportunity for the Austrian team as teaching observation and pedagogical developments are not usually given enough priority at higher technical schools which are rather focused on keeping up-to-date with rapid technological development and fulfilling business needs.

Pilot in HUNGARY

The Hungarian pilot began in late February and ended in June. It involved a team of three teachers from the BMSZC Neumann János Informatics Technology School: two teaching vocational subjects, Gina Tellér (IT) and Zoltán Várady (electronics), and one teaching a general subject (maths), Mónika Németh. The research topic of their Lesson Study concerned the challenge of 'closing the gap' between learning the theory and practice of designing and creating simple electronic circuits.



The teachers piloted the LS4VET course by closely collaborating with the LS facilitator and e-tutors from the other two Hungarian project partners (ELTE and ITStudy). They met regularly online, and the facilitator and e-tutors attended their LS research lesson in the school. The teachers also met on their own, either online or offline, to work on course tasks. The school leadership was very supportive and cleared a weekly joint session (45 minutes) for them in their timetable. However, the teachers felt that completing the course demanded more investment and time than they had anticipated. Nevertheless, they were pleased to have learned the basics of how to do LS and experienced how much impact it could have when work is done in small steps by thinking through and planning together a single lesson. They gave valuable advice on how to improve the course content and Moodle platform.

Pilot in NETHERLANDS

In the spring of 2022, four Dutch VET-teachers worked with the principles of LS4VET, as covered in the e-course. Hayo, Tom, Alineke and Anne-Marie did not know the Lesson Study method yet and were

introduced to it during the kick-off meeting. Then, under the guidance of facilitator Anne, they met weekly to prepare, implement and reflect on a lesson about inquiry behavior in VET. The last meeting was in July. The teachers enjoyed reviewing a lesson, lesson goals, and student behavior. They indicated that the Lesson Study especially ensured that they started talking about students learning processes, which does not happen naturally in vocational education. According to the VET-teachers we could improve reflection, which could be built in more so that they reflect continuously during the cycle. Also, including industry or academic knowledge was not done automatically. We learnt that we could help VET-teacher doing this. Two of the teachers will very likely use these experiences to guide other teachers in a lesson study starting this fall.



Conclusion

LS4VET course curriculum, module content and Moodle platform, based on the evaluation of all data collected (through online forms, focus group interviews, tutor/facilitator note-taking and informal discussions) can be further improved. The main outcome of the pilots was that we decided to extend the duration of the course to reduce the course-related workload of participants. The main LS4VET courses will begin in September/October 2022 and in the autumn term participants will only be doing Modules 1-2 (or possibly also Module 3). Partners will adjust the jointly developed English course (curriculum and learning content) to their local conditions and needs.

Transnational Project Meetings

The 4th project meeting was held in Gödöllő, Hungary, organized jointly by ELTE and ITStudy on June 2-3, 2022, where the partnership discussed important professional topics and current issues.

Meeting objectives were, among others:

- Discussing feedback on the LS4VET course pilots
- Finalising the LS4VET course (curriculum and modules) and the LS4VET Storyboard and Toolkit
- Discussing plans for the Multiplier events and the required documentation (invitation, agenda, signed participant list, minutes and photos)
- Planning the implementation of the main course.

On the second day, as the final part of the meeting, the participants paid a visit to the Hungarian partner school Neumann János Informatics Technical School, where they could learn about the school as well as Hungarian VET.



We received a fruitful report from the school leaders on their experiences during the pilot, and we could see a classroom work as well, with IT students who were involved into the first LS4VET pilots in Hungary.



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Teacher collaboration plays a vital role in various elements of teachers' work and was found to have a positive impact on teaching quality and student performance. Lesson Study is a particularly promising model of teachers' professional development based on professional teacher collaboration and focusing on the improvement of student learning through improving teachers' methodological skills. The method, however, only sporadically and not systematically been applied in VET before. In this project, Lesson Study will be systematically applied in VET contexts, which is expected to bring about innovative development in both domains.

[Is4vet.itstudy.hu](https://www.is4vet.itstudy.hu)

PROJECT DATA

Title: Teachers' Collaboration through Lesson Study for Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training

Acronym: LS4VET

Project ID: 2020-1-HU01-KA202-078848

Program: Erasmus+ KA2

Project type: Strategic partnership

Target group: teachers and trainers working in VET schools

Secondary target group: teacher educators and student teachers

Beneficiaries: VET students

Participant countries: Austria, Hungary, Malta, The Netherlands

Project start: 1 September 2020

Project end: 31 August 2023

AIMS

The LS4VET project aims to adapt the Lesson Study methodology for the sector of VET in order to achieve deep and sustainable impact – that is, improvement of the quality of education – in VET schools that will apply the method. Lesson Study has been found to be particularly effective because:

- it is a bottom-up approach of development, where professional development is done not “to” but “by and with” the teachers,
- it is job-embedded and focuses on teachers' real educational contexts in order to improve student learning through teachers' learning of new teaching methods and changing their teaching practice,
- it involves deep teacher collaboration when teachers actively learn through designing, teaching, evaluating and researching lessons together over an extended period of time.

The adaptation of the Lesson Study methodology to VET will be carried out in a close collaboration of expert partners (teacher educators) and VET schools' teachers and students. This process will be supported by formal training (an e-learning course) and mentoring for VET teachers and trainers to learn, adapt and pilot the method of Lesson Study in their own schools.

PROJECT PARTNERS

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University Institute of Intercultural Psychology and Education (Hungary) – project coordinator

iTStudy Hungary Educational and Research Centre Ltd. (Hungary)

Neumann János Computer Science Technical School (Hungary)

Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich (Austria)

HTL Wiener Neustadt (Austria) - *associated partner*

Università ta' Malta (Malta)

Institute of Tourism Studies (Malta)

University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (The Netherlands)

Stichting Landstede (The Netherlands)

